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A Doctoral Resume

Women in the Select Short Stories of Mahashweta Devi: A Critical Study

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mahashweta Devi is a reputed Bengali writer and influential social activist. The Jnanpith awardee devotes her time studying and writing about the struggles faced by the tribal communities. Her works raised voice against the mute sufferings of the subalterns in the postcolonial milieu. The experiences and spaces of marginalized-dominated women are rebellious and have multiple shades of formation and understanding. The marginalized women are those who are living in the peripheral line of living in terms of their gender discrimination, class differences and caste position, particularly as native woman. These kinds of women are usually unnoticed in the common society. Their sufferings are long been avoided and do not consider as 'wrong' but the usual consequences of everyday life. Additionally, these women do not have any voices in regard of their authority on their own body and everyday life of living. This body authority is controlled by her superior male partner. Even, the act of defacement of the female body is considered as the part of the normal act in case of marginalized women. In this hierarchy, the colonized, the marginalized culture, the women are branded as a troublesome group both socially and culturally.

On the other hand, all these stories, in all together raise the issue of women's voices in terms of social, caste and class division as well as their individuality particularly their right to their own body. On the other hand, these women characters do not have their own voices. Similarly, Mahasweta gives the voices to the characters. She speaks the 'unspeakable' truth of these characters. However, her voice is limited within a certain territory. People who are from Bengal and understand Bengali language and also people who are known to tribal-indigenous life, marginal life of women are mostly her readers. This territory expanded through the translations and criticisms of Gayatri Charavarty Spivak, a well-known critique in contemporary literature of the world.

Mahashweta Devi contributed herself in the field of literature with novels, short story collections and dramas. The present research deals with the selected short story collections of Mahashweta Devi. Short story is a favorite form of present-day writing. Many novelists wrote short stories along with novels. Short stories are long continued to meet needs of

authors and readers and find new material for its special purposes in a constantly changing world. Mahashweta Devi is widely recognized as one of the most important short-story writers, not just in India but in the whole world of speaking English. She was honored with various literary awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award (in Bengali), Jnanpith Award and Ramon Magsaysay Award along with India's civilian awards Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan. She is genius to know the ordinary lives of people and capture the passion and contradiction that is not easy to find out.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study has the following objectives:

1. This research aims at discovering the various themes of Mahashweta Devi's select short stories comprising the theme of identity, love, betrayal, marriage, relationship between men and women etc.

2. To find out the different characteristic features of Mahashweta Devi's select short stories as form of literature, such as her strong regional focus as a setting of her stories.

3. To understand the complexity of her female characters.

4. To investigate the complexity of men-women relationship, their pattern of behavior, their married life, yearning for freedom, love, adultery, loss and suffering.

5. To understand the problems of women of the tribal and marginalized community.

III. HYPOTHESIS:

The present study is based on the following hypothesis:

1. There are applications of approaches like feminism, and psychological etc.

2. She used strong words, spare, lucid and extraordinary language. Difficult passages in domestic or sexual life occupy situations frequently treated in fiction, intense clarity of phrase and image, complexity and multiplicity of plot.

3. Mahashweta Devi's art of telling story and setting is different from other story writers. Most of her characters are women and real to life. Her stories reveal truth and ambiguity of life: ironic and serious at the same time.

4. Her stories explore human complexities.

5. Setting of her stories are based on regional characters.

IV. Scope and Limitation:

The scope for the present research will be including the selected short story collections of Mahashweta Devi. All the available printed and electronic material will be selected for the study. The study material for research will be collected from primary and secondary sources. The limitation will be confined to Mahashweta Devi's *Breast Stories* (1997), *Old Woman* (1999), *Imaginary Maps* (1993), *Outcast* (2002) and *In the Name of the Mother* (2011).

V. TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME

This research tentatively proposes to follow the chapter scheme given below:

Preface and Acknowledgement

Chapter I	Introduction
Chapter II	Domesticity in the writings of Mahashweta Devi
Chapter III	Centralization of Woman in *Breast Stories* and *Old Woman*
Chapter IV	Centralization of Woman in *Imaginary Maps*, *Outcast* and *In the Name of the Mother*
Chapter V	Conclusion

A Select Bibliography

In the first chapter, life and achievement of Mahashweta Devi is to be focused as an author. Her life, various influences on her, career, contribution to literature, work for society and country also going to discuss. This chapter is also deals with the historical background of Indian literature, acknowledgement of Indian literature by English world, inclusion of Indian writing in the domain of world literature especially short story as a form of literature.

The second chapter proposes to study the domestic life of Mahashweta Devi's female characters from selected short stories. This chapter will also focus on the men-women relationship, their form of behavior, their connubial life, yearning for freedom, love, adultery, loss and suffering and exploitation of unprivileged women by powerful community. It will also reveal the emotions like layers of onion that explore her character's lives.

The third chapter focuses on the female characters of two short story collections named *Breast Stories* and *Old Woman. Breast Stories* (1997) includes three short stories titled *Draupadi, Behind the Bodice* and *Breast Giver. Old Woman* (1999) consists of two short stories named *Statue and The Fairy Tale of Mohanpir.*

The fourth chapter will explore the stories from *Imaginary Maps (1993), Outcast (2002)* and *In the Name of the Mother (2011).* It will also focus on the lives of female characters from *The Hunt, Doulti the Bountiful, Pterodactyl, Pirtha, and Puran Sahay, Dhouli, Shanichari, The Fairytale of Rajabasha,* Chinta, *Ma, From Dusk to Dawn, Sindhabala, Jamunabati's Mother* and *Giribala*.

The fifth chapter intends to sum up the arguments of earlier chapters and will ultimately come to a certain conclusion.

VI. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO SOCIETY:

The present research work will be an attempt to analyse the female characters projected by Mahashweta Devi. Hence this research will help to create an awareness among the masses about their present journey, struggle and countryside life. The research will be helpful to acquaint how her characterization is different from other short story writers. Therefore, the significance of the present study becomes still important because this kind of study would be useful to create an alertness about the plight of marginalized and tribal women.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be adopted for the present research is descriptive, interpretative, analytical and critical with the help of various printed and electronic, primary and secondary sources. The data will be critically analyzed and evaluated in order to present Mahashweta Devi's female characters. Finally, the general findings and inferences would be put forth. MLA recent methodology (MLA Style-sheet 9th edition) will be strictly followed for documentation.

VIII. PROBABLE DATE OF COMPLETION OF WORK

The present research work would probably be completed within two to three years from the date of registration.

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